

FONZ LETTER

NEW ZEALAND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE

Friends of New Zealand

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A FONZ farewell...

Dear friends,

After over 4.5 years as New Zealand's Ambassador to the EU and NATO, I head back to Wellington on 16 January. It's truly been an honour to serve in this capacity and to see the deepening of the relationship with the EU and with Europe more generally in that time.

We may be some 19,000 kilometres distant, but every day there is a reminder of the incredible breadth and depth of the links between Europe and New Zealand.



NZ Mission team says goodbye to Ambassador David Taylor

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Whether it's our principled stand on climate change and the need for real ambition to

deal with the problems that confront us, our strong support for effective multilateral institutions and effective international rules, our support for inclusion and diversity, the importance of science-based policy making, new thinking to deal with the emerging opportunities and challenges around digital skills or ensuring that agriculture delivers what people need, the EU and New Zealand are taking positions and seeking to advance processes that make a difference for our people. I've been particularly pleased to see the effort led by France and New Zealand in the wake of the Christchurch attacks last March to curb extremist online content.

At the community level, we see large numbers of young people travelling in both directions on working holiday schemes, tourists exploring the sights, and business people trading and investing.

These connections help build prosperity and improve connections and understanding.

And at the political level, there has also been increased contact befitting a relationship as close as that between the EU and New Zealand. My team has managed three Prime Ministerial visits to Brussels over my term and many other inwards visits. We welcomed a substantial number of EU leaders and Ministers in New Zealand over that time also, as well as six members of the last College of Commissioners, many EU officials and biennial DANZ visits.

It's been a pleasure to work with members of the European Parliament on many of these issues, as well as in support of the Partnership Agreement on Relations and Cooperation (PARC) that was approved last year and the EU-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations that commenced in 2018. The PARC has put the overall relationship into a more structured framework that will evolve over time.

The FTA, when concluded, will modernise the trade relationship between the EU and New Zealand and create new opportunities for both sides. We very much hope a mutually beneficial deal can be struck soon, reflecting climate and sustainability considerations as well. This would fit with the ambition of the new Commission, send a positive

signal on trade and environment more generally, and fill in the one gap in our excellent relationship.

May I take this opportunity to say a heartfelt thank you to the Delegation for Australia New Zealand (DANZ) and all of our FONZ friends for their engagement and support over recent years. It's been a pleasure to work with past and current members – thanks for sharing your thoughts on various subjects with me and visiting New Zealand politicians, officials and business leaders and listening to New Zealand perspectives too. My team and I have learned much from our interactions with you and we see the benefit the European Parliament delivers through its work.

In closing this "FONZ farewell", a special thanks also to DANZ chair Ulrike Müller and to FONZ chair Axel Voss for their terrific support, as well as to the founding chair Derek Vaughan.

To all FONZ members, please stay connected with my successor Carl Reaich who arrives in Brussels in late January and please help him build further this friendship group. I know he's looking forward to meeting you!



David Taylor
New Zealand Ambassador to the EU

New EU Ambassador to New Zealand

We're delighted by the arrival of Nina Obermaier in Wellington as the new EU Ambassador to New Zealand. She will present her credentials to New Zealand Governor-General Dame Patsy Reddy in late January 2020.



Farewell dinner for Nina Obermaier in Brussels hosted by Ambassador Taylor

Ms Obermaier has spent the past three years working as Adviser to the Deputy Chief Negotiator for the UK Withdrawal from the European Union. She was Lead Negotiator for issues related to Ireland/Northern Ireland. Prior to this, Nina was responsible for relations with Switzerland.

We look forward to working with Ms Obermaier and wish her and her family all the best for their time in New Zealand!

We would also like to thank outgoing Ambassador Bernard Savage. The EU-New Zealand relationship has certainly shifted up a gear under his tenure and we would like to thank him for his great contribution in making this happen. We hope he remains a true friend of New Zealand!

EU-NZ Development Dialogue

In October 2019, New Zealand and the EU met to discuss development cooperation and Pacific issues. Jonathan Kings, Deputy Secretary of the Pacific and Development Group of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, travelled to Brussels to head the NZ delegation.

This was a demonstration of the importance New Zealand places on the discussion and the

relationship with the EU, in particular working together in the Pacific. Both parties agreed to strengthen collaboration on activities under themes such as gender, energy, budget support and climate change.

The new Pacific and Development Counsellor Liz Paton now based with the NZ Embassy team in Brussels will help take this work forward.

Parliamentary Under-Secretary Tabuteau joins ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting

Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs Fletcher Tabuteau travelled to Germany, Poland, Austria, and Spain in December to bolster New Zealand's political and trade relationships in Europe. While in Spain, Mr Tabuteau represented New Zealand at the 14th Asia-Europe (ASEM) Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Madrid.

"New Zealand strongly supports effective multilateralism – where countries band together to confront global challenges – and values the opportunity to discuss pressing regional and international issues with our European and Asian partners," Mr Tabuteau said.

Mr Tabuteau also travelled to Berlin to attend the 'Advocating Human Rights in the 21st Century'

conference on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs on 10 December. "Attendance at this conference, hosted by German Foreign Minister Maas, underlines New Zealand's strong support for the protection and promotion of human rights", Mr Tabuteau said.



Mr Tabuteau meets His Majesty King Felipe VI of Spain © European Union

Christchurch Call online crisis response workshop held in Wellington

On 3 and 4 December, governments and tech companies held a two-day workshop hosted by YouTube in Wellington to test the Christchurch Call Shared Crisis Response Protocol.

The workshop aimed to refine and strengthen the response in the event of a terrorist attack with online implications.

Companies, governments, civil society experts and NGOs worked through a series of fictional scenarios designed to be both confronting and take into account evolving risks, to ensure the protocol and others like it are fit for purpose.

The workshop was attended by policy and law enforcement representatives from Christchurch Call

supporters. This included Australia, Canada, the European Commission, France, Germany, Japan, Jordan, New Zealand, and the UK.

“Because of the Christchurch Call to Action, I’m confident companies and Governments are better prepared to respond quickly, and in a coordinated way, to prevent the mass dissemination of terrorist and violent extremist content online”, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said.

“This workshop is about ensuring the Crisis Response Protocol is an effective tool that will help prevent social media being used again in the way it was on March 15”.



Prime Minister Ardern attended the workshop

Fresh round of EU-NZ FTA negotiations

New Zealand hosted EU negotiators in Wellington for the sixth round of negotiations from 9 to 13 December. This was a very useful and productive round. Further text was agreed and we are now very close to conclusion for a number of chapters.

The round was also an opportunity to agree a forward plan for the negotiations. Negotiators are aiming to hold three further negotiations rounds before the European summer break with the next round planned for March.

New Zealand continues to progress work on geographical indications (GIs). We are currently holding a public consultation on proposed changes to New Zealand legislation to provide extended protection for GIs.

You can find more information about the latest round of the EU-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement, including a video update from Chief Negotiator Martin Harvey on the latest round, on the [Ministry's website](#).

World-first “low methane” sheep programme

The New Zealand livestock industry has started a world-first genetic programme intent on helping tackle climate change by breeding low methane-emitting sheep.



Photo credit: Flickr CC/ Donnie Ray Jones

The programme, led by Beef + Lamb New Zealand Genetics, has launched a “methane research breeding value”. Breeding value (BV) is used to help select traits that ram breeders want to bolster within their flock, in this case low methane-producing animals.

The launch of this significant breeding tool was possible thanks to a 10-year multi-million dollar collaboration between the Pastoral Greenhouse Gas Research Consortium (PGGRC), New Zealand Agricultural Greenhouse Gas Research Centre (NZAGRC) and AgResearch, supported by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and the Ministry for Primary Industries.

White Island eruption

A month after the eruption of the Whakaari/White Island volcano that claimed the lives of twenty people and injured many more, our thoughts are with those in recovery and with the families of the victims.

Eighteen people have been confirmed dead following the 9 December disaster, with a further two missing and presumed dead. Twenty-five people are still being treated in hospitals in New Zealand and in Australia.

Stephen Colbert comes to New Zealand

A New Zealand beginner who wants to learn more about Aotearoa? Then watch the Late Show [‘The Newest Zealander’ series](#) that follows the 6-day trip to the country of talk show host Stephen Colbert.

The idea for the visit started in September 2018, when New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern appeared on his show and extended to Colbert, who is a Tolkien fan, the offer to become a citizen of Hobbiton.

Stephen Colbert was picked up at the airport by Prime Minister Ardern before being treated to a “state dinner” of barbecue sausages and white bread at the

Prime Minister’s home. He also took a tour of Wellington with Kiwi stars Lucy Lawless and Bret McKenzie and rugby lessons with “legends from the All Blacks”.



Youtube screenshot